1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 M236 Tarasco M236
Sierra Tarascans

585 584 said, "Well, it is custom. The girl was not forced but went willingly. There is no reason to be angry about this, nor with me, for I am not concerned in the matter but come to speak for the parents of the groom. They have come as is proper to arrange the affair." Late in the evening the father returned and agreed to the marriage, but he said little and clearly was angry.

182 585 602 One aspect of the marriage ceremonies not sufficiently emphasized in the preceding accounts is important: the new marriage means that the two families, in the most extended sense, will constantly cooperate in all sorts of ceremonial occasions. Thus, the groom's male relatives will help to move a house or roof a house, while the bride's female relatives will be called on to work in the kitchen on the same occasions. Both families will likewise be concerned with all the subsequent crisis periods in varying degree, especially when a grandchild marries at some future date.

585 The function of the wedding as an occasion for celebration, the release of tensions through drinking, the provision of diversion with the dancing, and the general stimulus through extensive social interaction is very considerable. For the participants, weddings probably rank as high or higher than fiestas as occasions for social contacts and amusement.

585 887 A feature most clearly demonstrated in the weddings is the much greater participation of the older women. Young women with children usually do not take a very active part in the kitchen work, nor are they leaders in the exchange of clothing. The old women, on the other hand, are in the forefront of all activities. Essentially the wedding is a woman's affair in many respects. Old women are the most active in the kitchen. They are the first to start drinking, although they rarely drink to the excess common among the men, and they are the first to dance. Indeed, on older women the playing of dance music has an almost compulsive effect. Time and again, when dance music is being played, even though it is not time for dancing, some of the old women will be seen quietly dancing by themselves in a corner.

585 587 Although the ceremonies of marriage are most elaborate in the case of first marriages, often marriages of widows or widowers are

291 unmarried girls put the brightest outside; married women wear the darkest outside.

521 517 Undoubtedly the greatest amusement in Cherán is simply talking. Both men and women gather in their spare time and talk by the hour. Most of the talk is gossip. Who has recently done what, the price of corn, the condition of the crops, the change in the weather, forthcoming events, the problems of the church, the progress of the war, what one would do if the Germans came to Cherán—all the everyday things of life and a great deal of speculation about the unknown form subjects of conversation. The North American members of the staff found two questions most common in 1940 and 1941—what were the chances of getting work if one went to the United States, especially since the rearmament program, and what did we think of the progress of the war. Particularly on the subject of the war and its economic repercussions for Cherán did men seem surprisingly well-informed, considering the few who read and the scarcity of newspapers.

538 With all the talk that goes on in Cherán for amusement's sake, one would expect to find an important repertory of tales. This is not the case. No doubt one could collect a body of tales if one cultivated the older people assiduously. The tales that were found were few, and the majority of them circled about hidden treasure. In addition, there were a few dealing with supernatural happenings and some fragments about the founding of Cherán. Even these prosaic stories had to be sought for diligently and were told badly and in obviously incomplete form. Most persons questioned could not recall any specific occasion on which tales had been told, nor did they know any stories themselves. Story telling is not a significant part of the culture of Cherán.

OLD AGE

887 886 The transition from adult to old age is not a clear one in Cherán. In general, parents whose children are all grown up, married, and moved away from home are not necessarily "old" by Cherán standards. At least one individual apparently over 80 years old was encountered who still did his own farm work, was completely self-supporting, and an inde-

Library E-S (1945-1961)1966 M336 Tamara M336
Gp. 201 M7 Hamm Tamara

886 fatigable dancer at fiestas. By any standard
887 this man is old, but he certainly shows no sign of senescence, although it is unlikely he is still sexually potent. Similarly, women obviously far past child-bearing age are often the most active workers at fiestas and the most eager dancers, in contrast, to the often lackadaisical attitudes of young mothers who dance not at all.

886 For women the menopause comes between 40 and 50. Information from women on sexual subjects is difficult to secure even by women, and the scanty information is quite unsatisfactory.[28]

Some women appear to be more or less spiritless and sad after the menopause, while others seem to be quite gay. In some cases this difference may have psychological basis or may reflect the presence or absence of physiological difficulties. Indifference of husbands, the sexual potency of husbands, and the continuance of sexual relations may also have some bearing on individual cases. At least one woman expressed herself as pleased to have passed the menopause because "now she was free" and was not dependent upon man. Further study of the problem is needed but would require considerable time and tact on the part of women investigators.

888 In general, whether old age is depressing and unhappy or not seems to depend upon the continuance of a successful marital relationship and the possession of adequate economic resources. The only really unhappy old people seem to be elderly women without children or husbands who eke out a miserable existence in ways that could not be discovered. They dwell in hovels and lean-tos of brush and boards, carry their own wood, and to some extent live on charity. Those with reasonable health and either dutiful children or enough property to insure care on the part of the children seem to lead a fairly satisfactory life. Often nephews and nieces also help care for old people; again, possession of property probably aids in securing

[28] Early in the study Mrs. Ruth W. Benke, of New York, aided by the nurse from the boarding school at Puyallup and by a Mexican girl from Puyallup, tried to fill out comprehensive questionnaires on sexual subjects, directed primarily toward gaining insight into the psychological problems related to the menopause. She was able to secure only three reasonably complete schedules and even these probably contain omissions and some unanswered questions. I am indebted to Mrs. Benke for copies of the schedules and have drawn upon them slightly for these remarks.